In response to that Office Action, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claim 103, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein.

Please amend Claims 1, 19, 38, 44, 51, 70, 89, 95, and 104-106 to read as follows. A marked-up copy of the amended claims, showing the changes made thereto, is attached.

1. (Three Times Amended) A response apparatus according to Claim 19, further comprising:

response message determination means for determining a response message in accordance with the discriminated type of the error,

wherein said response information preparation means prepares the response information for the determined response medium in text form by combining the determined response message with an opening or closing phrase that is characteristic of the response medium.

19. (Three Times Amended) A response apparatus comprising:

- 2 -

status acquisition means for acquiring a status of a machine to be checked;

discrimination means for discriminating a type of an error indicated by the acquired status;

response addressee determination means for determining a response addressee depending upon the discriminated type of the error;

response medium determination means for determining a response medium based on the discriminated type of the error;

response information preparation means for preparing response information representing the discriminated type of the error in accordance with the determined response addressee and medium; and

response information output means for outputting said prepared response information to said determined response addressee using the determined response medium.

38.   (Twice Amended)   A response apparatus comprising:

response procedure determination means for determining a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

response information preparation means for preparing response information in accordance with the determined response procedure;

response information output means for outputting the prepared response information to the determined response addressee using the determined response medium;

response result determination means for determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting the response information; and

re-response control means for, when said response result determination means ascertains that said response has failed, permitting said response procedure determination means to determine a re-response procedure in which a re-response addressee or a re-response medium is different from the determined response procedure leading to the failed response, permitting said response information preparation means to prepare re-response information in accordance with the re-response procedure, and permitting said response information output means to output the re-response information.

44.   (Twice Amended)   A response apparatus comprising:

response procedure determination means for determining a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

response information preparation means for preparing response information in accordance with the determined response procedure;

response information output means for outputting the prepared response information to the determined response addressee using the determined response medium;

response addressee status acquisition means for acquiring a status for the determined response addressee;

determination means for employing the status for the determined response addressee that is acquired by said response addressee status acquisition means to determine whether or not a person at the determined response addressee can manage the response; and

re-response control means for, when said determination means determines that said person cannot manage the response, permitting said response procedure determination means to determine a re-response procedure in which a re-response addressee or a re-response medium is different from the determined response procedure leading to the response which could not be managed by said person,

- 5 -

permitting said response information preparation means to prepare re-response information in accordance with the re-response procedure, and permitting said response information output means to output the re-response information in accordance with the re-response procedure.

52. (Three Times Amended) A response method according to Claim 70, further comprising the steps of:

determining a response message in accordance with the discriminated type of the error; and

preparing the response information for the determined response medium in text form by combining the determined response message with an opening or closing phrase that is characteristic of the response medium.

70. (Three Times Amended) A response method comprising the steps of:

acquiring a status of a machine to be checked;

discriminating a type of an error indicated by the acquired status;

determining a response addressee depending upon the discriminated type of the error;

determining a response medium based on the discriminated type of the error;

preparing response information representing the discriminated type of the error in accordance with the determined response addressee and medium; and

outputting said prepared response information to said determined response addressee using the determined response medium.

89.   (Amended) A response method comprising the steps of:

determining a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

preparing response information in accordance with the determined response procedure;

outputting the prepared response information to the determined response addressee using the determined response medium;

determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting the response information; and

determining, when it is ascertained at said response result determination step that said response has failed, a re-response procedure in which a re-response

addressee or a re-response medium is different from the determined response procedure leading to the failed response, preparing re-response information at said response information preparation step in accordance with the re-response procedure, and outputting the re-response information at said response information output step.

95. (Twice Amended) A response method comprising the steps of:

determining a response procedure;

preparing response information in accordance with the determined response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

outputting the prepared response information to the determined response addressee using the determined response medium;

acquiring a status for the determined response addressee;

employing the status for the determined response addressee that is acquired at said response addressee status acquisition step to determine whether or not a person at the determined response addressee can manage the response; and

- 8 -

determining, when it is ascertained at said determination step that said person cannot manage the response, a re-response procedure in which a re-response addressee or a re-response medium is different from the determined response procedure leading to the response which could not be managed by said person at said response procedure determination step, preparing re-response information at said response information preparation step in accordance with the re-response procedure, and outputting the re-response information at said response information output step in accordance with the re-response procedure.

104. (Three Times Amended) A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

acquiring a status of a machine to be checked;

discriminating a type of an error indicated by the acquired status;

determining a response addressee depending upon the discriminated type of the error;

determining a response medium based on the discriminated type of the error;

preparing response information representing the discriminated type of the error in accordance with the determined response addressee and medium; and

outputting said prepared response information to said determined response addressee in accordance with the determined response procedure.

105. (Twice Amended) A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

determining a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

preparing response information in accordance with the determined response procedure;

outputting the prepared response information to the determined response addressee using the determined response medium;

determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting the response information; and

determining, when it is ascertained at said response result determination step that said response has failed, a re-response procedure in which a re-response addressee or a re-response medium is different from the determined response procedure leading to the failed response at response procedure determination means, preparing re-response information at said response information preparation step in accordance with the re-response procedure, and outputting the re-response information at said response information output step.

106. (Twice Amended) A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

determining a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

preparing response information in accordance with the determined response procedure;

outputting the prepared response information to the determined response addressee using the determined response medium;

- 11 -